



Good Partner, Bad Partner: Which role do you play?

Real Places Conference 2018





THC Staff Participants

- **Amy Hammons** — CHC Outreach Program Coordinator
amy.hammons@thc.texas.gov
- **Candice McClendon** — CHC Outreach Program Specialist
candice.mcclendon@thc.texas.gov



Why Partnering: A story

- CHC Outreach Program focuses on organizational capacity building
- Recruitment and retention are a common CHC struggle
- Turns out, recruitment and retention are tied to organizational visibility
- Partnering increases visibility and strengthens organizational identity

Partnering helps organizations by . . .

- increasing pool of volunteers
- expanding funding opportunities
- diversifying available skill sets
- providing more visibility in community
- expanding educational opportunities
- diversifying outreach opportunities



What characteristics contribute to a constructive partnership?





Characteristics of Healthy Partnerships

- **Effective communication** – Share information, opportunities, and resources.
- **Collaboration** – Allow all partners to have a voice. Plans and outcomes should reflect what each partner wants to accomplish.
- **Respectful interactions** – A healthy partnership considers the needs of both organizations. Issues should be resolved with respect and understanding.
- **Relationships evolve** – Realize when your organization isn't partnering in such a way as to meet the needs of partner organizations and make adjustments.



What characteristics lead to less productive partnerships?





Signs of Unproductive Partnerships

- Being territorial with information / not sharing information
- Focusing solely on your needs—what you want, when you want it, how you want it
- Controlling the partnership instead of enabling an organic collaboration
- Providing the same events, the same way, every year with the same participants

**Ask the
following
questions:**

Communication Responsibilities

- Is it your organization's responsibility to keep its partners informed?
- Do you have expectations regarding how often partners should communicate with you?
- Do you have a communications plan/contact?

**Ask the
following
questions:**

Partnership Benefits

- Should each organization benefit from every joint endeavor?
- Are there partnership trade-offs?
- Is the partnership mutually beneficial?

**Ask the
following
questions:**

Collaboration and Ownership

- Should you determine what will be the most helpful way for partners to participate?
- Do you ask for partner preferences and abilities?
- Do you follow-up to see if partner goals have been accomplished?

**Ask the
following
questions:**

Adapting to Organizational Change

- Can changes in leadership—for your org or partner—influence organizational change?
- Are changes in leadership seen as opportunities?
- Do you anticipate organizational change over time?



How to improve partnerships

- Specify what you seek from partner:
 - Financial sponsorship
 - Advertising assistance
 - Event planning and execution
 - Something else?
- Initiate proactive planning
- Use productivity questions to help frame conversations about what your organization needs





Establishing realistic expectations



- Relationships with political figures
- Large/high-profile organizations
- Smaller or less-established organizations



When to re-evaluate the worth of a partnership?

- Partner involved in political controversy that you should avoid
- Internal fighting gets in the way of productive partnering
- Backlash from community interferes with organizational goals
- Demonstrates more “bad partner” characteristics than good, even after having had conversations with partner to address issues



Partnering Tips

- Identify non-traditional partners
- Diversify participation
- Invite participation in events





Diversifying Ongoing Events



- What can be improved?
- Could a partnership help?
- Think of three non-traditional partners that may make sense to approach.



Moving Forward — Make a Plan

- Reflect on current partnerships
- Adjust approach/expectations, if necessary
- Think of new partnership avenues that could be helpful to your organization
- Have a plan to approach — remember to be specific about goals and expectations





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